Home > Health Services Workers' Union of Ghana commemorates its 50th anniversary

Under the theme "50 years of organizing: consolidating the gains for greater prospects", HSWU held on the same occasion its 11th quadrennial delegates conference in Kumasi, on 28-30 June, at the Great Hall of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST).

As it has always been, the young workers and women meetings preceded the main conference. Young workers and women from all the regions of Ghana converged at the Great Hall of KNUST in Kumasi to deliberate on issues affecting them. Young workers were advised to re-educate themselves in order for strong unions to be built and in achieving that, young workers were encouraged to deploy their best talents where they can most effectively and efficiently function.

Speaking to the young workers, Brother Papa Kwasi Danquah, Head of Administration and Legal Affairs TUC Ghana encouraged young workers to deploy in all frontline of their struggle. We need to deploy in all frontline of our struggle from workplace to union bureaucracy to global mechanisms of working class solidarity. We cannot create a vulture system in our fighting machine based on where the money or the patent power is, we can easily be read and defeated if we do that.??

Addressing the women was the outgoing General Secretary of the union, Brother Abu Kuntulo. He fortified women to have a good networking with other unions and emulate the good values from them. He expressed his deep satisfaction that women are now able to take up leadership positions unlike the previous years when women would have to be begged.

PSI Regional Secretary for Africa and Arab Countries, David Dorkenoo, in his address to the main conference emphasised that the theme of the conference was appropriate looking at the progress of the union over the years.

50 years of Organizing: Consolidating the Gains for Greater Prospects' is very appropriate looking at the progress of this union over the years. We from PSI have seen the positive impact of current and past leaders of this great union on the
Brother Abu Kuntulo in his last farewell message as General Secretary of this formidable and innovative union expressed that the conference was happening at a time that the labour movement is confronted with many challenges but nonetheless members have reasons to be expectant.

"Our conference is taking place at a time the labour movement is confronted with many challenges such as high cost of living, energy and power crises coupled with periodic utility tariff increases, the issues of adequate pensions for our members and above all the full implementation of the newly signed collective Agreement between the union and the Ministry of Health and its agencies. Mindful of the fact that members have reasons to be expectant, the union had position itself strategically to collaborate with the leadership of the TUC, Organized Labour and other Social Partners within the Public Service as well as the Ministries to find amicable solutions to the above challenges which have some untold hardships on our members and other public sector workers."

He resonated to the conference in session that consolidating the gains of the union cannot be the responsibility of just few leaders and officials of the union but rather a shared responsibility for both the leaders and members at all levels. He again saw the need for the union to reshape its membership service delivery to attract young workers, the professional and managerial staff of the service due to the fact that trade union membership is no longer automatic, but believed to be a concept of jobs for life in view of the labour market flexibility concept being pursued by most employers.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister Hon. Alexander Segbefia, the ministry promised to address some of the challenges facing the union, such as the implementation of the Health Sector Occupational Pension Scheme under the Tier-2 Pension Scheme, the implementation of the newly signed collective Agreement between the Union and the ministry and its agencies and the issue of the launching of the Laboratory National Policies.

"My Minister has informed me to assure the conference in session that as soon as he returns from his overseas trip, he will consider the issues and take necessary action to have them addressed."

The General Secretary of the TUC, Brother Kofi Asamoah, commended the HSWU for their massive contribution made towards the national health policy development over the past 50 years.

Other representatives from PSI affiliates, namely, Botswana Public Employees Union, National Association of Nigeria Nurses & Midwives and Medical & Health Workers Union of Nigeria, joined the HSWU of Ghana in their conference.

The conference was climaxed with the election of new leaderships. Brother Reynolds Ofosu Tenkorang as the new General Secretary, Franklin Owusu Ansah as the Deputy General
Secretary, Zakaria S. Mohammed as the National Chairman, Emmanuel Lloyd Baffoe as the 1st Vice National Chairman, Joyce Bonzie-Asmah as the 2nd vice National Chairperson, Godfred Oppong Kwakye as the 1st National Trustee and Thomas Duut as the 2nd National Trustee.

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